

## COASTAL STATES' CHALLENGES

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**Editor's note:** The following remarks represent the author's dual capacity as the Administrator of the Division of Soil and Water of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and as the current Chair of the Coastal States Organization (CSO). CSO was formed in 1970 to represent the interests of coastal states, including territories and commonwealths.

### **The Coastal Zone Management Challenge**

As we seek to enhance our nation's prosperity, revitalize communities and enhance economic development, we have a concurrent responsibility to address the increased demands that growth and development places on our coastal resources.

Congress was prescient when in 1972 it passed the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) providing incentives for states, on a voluntary basis, in cooperation with local governments

*...to encourage and assist the states to exercise effectively their responsibilities in the coastal zone through the development and implementation of management programs to achieve the wise use of the land and water resources of the coastal zone, giving full consideration to ecological, cultural, historic, and esthetic values as well as the needs for compatible economic development programs...(16 USC 1452(2))*

It is becoming increasingly clear the coastal communities need more support for an improved capacity to efficiently plan for and manage growth and development. An increased commitment is needed if we are going to achieve cost-effective investment in public infrastructure; identify and encourage a compatible mix of residential, commercial, and open-space uses; revitalize communities; and conserve and restore natural resources.

States have recognized the importance of guiding community development to make it more efficient, environmentally compatible, and integrated among the various government agencies. As of early 1998,

10 states have adopted comprehensive growth management acts that establish more rigorous requirements for local planning of community

development and for related state and regional actions. States have also recognized the importance of conservation of open space, discouraging sprawl development in rural areas, and protecting agricultural lands. The public also has indicated its strong

support for these initiatives. In 1998, nearly 200 ballot initiatives were approved by voters in calling for the management of development and the conservation of open space.

It is time for a major commitment through the CZMA to provide new and improved planning and management tools for local communities to help them better understand and address the extremely complex economic and ecological dynamics of coastal systems and communities.

### **Background**

The CZMA incorporated the essential principles of the "smart growth" and "sustainable development" movements over 20 years before the terminology came into vogue. It is not surprising that these principles were recognized first as essential to proper management of coastal resources and development where the concentration of people and their demand for the use of natural resources was most acute.

Providing suitable incentives and encouraging cooperation among the federal, state, and local governments is more important today than ever before. Coastal areas become more crowded every day. The rate of growth is fastest in coastal counties, where population densities are already five times the national average. In addition to being home to over

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50 percent of the U.S. population and most of its major cities, economic activity in coastal areas is vital to the nation—supporting 28.3 million jobs, incalculable indirect economic benefits as well as direct support for port and maritime trade, fisheries and mariculture industry, travel, recreation and tourism, oil and gas development; and, other ocean and coastal dependent industries.

The growing importance of wise coastal management in economic and human terms was dramatically demonstrated in 1998 by the outbreaks of harmful algal blooms and the expansion of the “dead zone” of the Gulf coast, as well as the extensive damage that resulted from hurricanes and the effects of El Niño events. These

events demonstrate the need for increased support for state and local efforts to control land-based sources of coastal pollution and to improve planning for coastal hazards. The potential impacts of human activities on coastal resources and conflicts among the competing uses for coastal resources will increase substantially in the years ahead as population and development increase.

The CZMA is the only federal statute which sets forth a comprehensive voluntary federal-state partnership based on the goal of maximizing sustainable economic and environmental objectives. The CZMA also provides a framework to enhance integration among federal, state, and local governments, encourage interagency coordination, provide incentives and assistance to communities, streamline the regulatory process, and encourage proactive planning and coastal management at the local level.

***Summary of CSO’s proposals for Reauthorization of the CZMA in 1999***

- (1) Provide increased support for the development of new tools, which will build capacity at

the state and local level through technical assistance and targeted support to states and communities, to implement place-based management in our nation’s critical coastal areas.

- (2) Provide for increased support for state coastal programs to address the cumulative and secondary impacts of development and land-based sources of polluted runoff.

- (3) Provide funding under the Coastal Zone Management Fund for regionally significant projects, international projects, emergency response to coastal hazards, and innovative demonstration projects addressed at local communities.

- (4) Clarify the role of and provide increase support for the National Estuarine Research Reserves and seek to build closer links to coastal program

- (5) Enhance federal support for base programs under the CZMA consistent with increased challenges and responsibilities, particularly in the nation’s largest states where base grants have been capped for the past seven years despite substantial increases in state and local need.

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***What Are the Current Trends in Coastal Management in the First State - Delaware?***

Many things are happening in the Coastal Management arena:

We have almost completed construction of a 5,550-square-foot building for research and education for coastal management, the first phase construction at our Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve. That building will be used for targeted, focused education and research for current CMP needs.

We have a new process to focus decision-making. Partnering with NOAA, Delaware Coastal Programs has institutionalized a method that uses internal and external experts and the public to problem solve in a much shorter time frame. Successful projects that have used this process include the Pea Patch Island Special Area Management Plan, COMPAS Delaware: Kent County Resource Protection Module, Dredging in Delaware, and Delaware Coastal Zone Act Environmental Indicators Project). The process recognizes the importance of good planning, but is ori-

ented toward implementation of methods to provide for reasonable growth and development while conserving and protecting our irreplaceable coastal resources.